The Evidence of Crime.

Major McLain was a peculiar man. Possessing many eccentricities and extreme ideas, he was called idiosyncratic by many, but nevertheless was a jolly, good-natured companion at the clubs. By his friends he was looked upon at times as being erratic, but his liberality and good nature more than counterbalanced his undesirable qualities. The king of good fellows on occasions, he was equally disagreeable when he was expected most of all to be cheerful and good humored. About three miles from the quiet little village of Vernon he had spent the greater portions of his days. From early boyhood he had lived at the old homestead, but, strange to say, he had never married. In the blessed state of bachelorhood he had passed his life, and now, at the mature age of three score and ten, he had no idea of taking unto himself a helpmeet. He was satisfied with his portion, and content, smiling and chuckling over human events, had never complained of his lot. So much for Major McLain.

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Just to the right of the McLain mansion lived Colonel Mashburn. It was an ordinary farm cottage that had given shelter to the colonel and his family for many years. The luxury of the McLain home was not to be found in the humbler dwelling of his neighbor, but it was home to the Mashburn family, and they looked with disdain and contempt upon the abiding place of their bachelor neighbor. Though the dwellings were separated by only a short distance, there was but little love lost between the two families. It is true that their lands adjoined and only a few blazed trees told the story of the boundary, yet that distance that is said to lend enchantment unfortunately was not great enough to bind the families in neighborly love.

Years previous to the time this story is written a bitter dispute as to the location of the line had caused a breach to occur between the Major and his neighbor. As time passed the chasm widened and the quarrel became more bitter. The county surveyor had been called in in the interest of peace and harmony, but his decision, which was in favor of Major McLain, failed to pour oil on the waters of discontent, and hostilities were again resumed with greater zest than ever before. It looked at times as if there would be war, and the inhabitants of the little settlement frequently discussed the final outcome of the feud.

As both men are now dead, I have decided to tell the story of the manner in which the dispute was finally settled. The story may or may not be true, but I will relate it just as it was told to me by one who lived in the neighborhood and was a friend of both Major McLain and Colonel Mashburn.

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Early one morning in May many years ago Colonel Mashburn left his home and walked down to the contested line boundary. He was in an unusually bad humor that morning, and had taken the walk with the hope that it would benefit him and aid his bad digestion. He had spent a restless night and was feeling the bad results. When he reached the line of blazed trees that had been long regarded as the boundary to his possessions he looked long and wistfully at the surroundings of his more prosperous neighbor. He conscientiously believed that he had been imposed upon, and his blood boiled madly and he was in a rage of passion. Finally his feelings overcame him, and with an oath he sought the path that led to the doorsteps of Major McLain's palatial home.

Colonel Mashburn walked rapidly up the long hill. He was angry, and it was his intention to have another talk with the Major and see if he could not either by threats or pleadings bring him to terms and secure possession of what he thought was his own. A farm hand at work in the field looked up from his plow, paused and then continued to the end of his furrow. At the door Colonel Mashburn was met by Major McLain. The two men glared at each other and then retired from view. The old negro cook heard several oaths, closed the door and went out into the cabin, telling one of the men employed about the place that there was going to be trouble.

Mr. Suttles, passing by on his horse, stopped at the gate, which was near the house, and listened at the quarrel. The story of the feud was old, and he paused only long enough to satisfy himself that the Major and Colonel Mashburn were quarreling, and then spurred his horse to catch the morning train to Abondale. Late in the afternoon Mr. Suttles returned. As he passed the McLain home he saw an immense crowd in the yard. The sheriff told him that Major McLain had been killed. A coroner's inquest was being held. That was all, and Suttles hurried on to his home, thinking of the quarrel he had overheard as he passed the house in the morning. At the door he was met by his wife, who told him how that Major McLain had been found dead in his chair. The old coachman made the discovery, and the alarm was given and the crowd assembled.

"I believe that Colonel Mashburn killed him," said Mrs. Suttles.

Leaning close down, Mr. Suttles whispered into the ear of his wife:

"I know it."

There was a peculiar emphasis to the words as they fell from the lips of her husband, and she looked up into his face inquiringly. The hot words of passion heard in the morning by Suttles were told.

Mr. Suttles went immediately to the home of Major McLain. He elbowed his way through a curious crowd and went into the room where the inquest was being held. The sheriff was closely questioning all who came into the room. Suttles was nervous, but he tried to conceal his true feelings. Beckoning the sheriff to the outside, he told what he had heard.

"Colonel Mashburn is not at home," said the sheriff.

"Here I am," and the Colonel, pale and trembling, looked into the face of the officer.

"You are my prisoner," said the sheriff, placing his hand on the arm of the Colonel.

"I thought so," coolly remarked the Colonel.

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Several weeks later the court room of Irondale county was filled to overflowing with eager and curious people. The windows were filled and there was no standing room in the large room.

Judge Lewis looked stern through his gold-rimmed glasses and knocked his gavel severely on the desk for order.

"Bring in the prisoner, Mr. Sheriff," said the judge.

Trembling and utterly hopeless, the Colonel staggered into the crowded court room. An ashy pallor was on his face and he fastened his eyes fixedly upon the floor.

In a clear voice the indictment found by the grand jury was read, and then the trial began. The first witness was the coroner, who held an inquest over the remains of the Major. He stated that the verdict was that deceased had come to his death on account of a gunshot wound, and that the jury believed the gun was fired by Col. Eugene J. Mashburn.

The county physician swore that the wound was just above the heart, and that death must have been instantaneous. When asked by counsel for the defense just what must have been the distance from which the shot was fired the physician stated that the nature of the wound was such as to cause him to believe that it must have been several feet—probably fifty.

The old coachman of the Major was next sworn and put upon the stand. Before the court, in a trembling voice, the negro told how he had found his master sitting in his chair stone dead. He said he was rubbing down the horses in the barn and found one of them had a sore place on his left hind leg. He thought something should be done for the horse and went into the library to consult with his master. When he entered the door Major McLain was sitting in the chair in which he was accustomed to take his morning nap. The darkey called him, but received no answer. He called repeatedly and then went close up to the Major. With a scream he fled from the room, for he saw his eyes were glassy and set far back into his head. He gave the alarm, but was too superstitious to again enter the room, believing it to be bad luck.

The cook, an old negress apparently eighty years old, was the next witness. She said she heard old Uncle Tom cry murder and rushed out of her house on the rear of the lot to see what was the matter. The details of the finding as told by the coachman were corroborated by the negress.

Mr. Suttles was then asked to take the stand.

In brief he stated that he was passing the home of Major McLain when he heard loud voices talking in a very excited and boisterous manner. He stopped and listened, and recognized the voice of Colonel Mashburn.

"Are you positive it was the voice of Colonel Mashburn?" asked the counsel for the defense.

"I would know the voice anywhere I were to hear it. I swear positively that it was Colonel Mashburn and Major McLain whom I heard quarreling in the room."

"What time was that?"

"It was half past 9 o'clock," replied the witness.

Here the State rested its case, and the defense announced that no testimony would be introduced, and that Colonel Mashburn would make a statement, when argument would be waived and the judge would be asked to charge the jury.

As Colonel Mashburn mounted the stand all eyes were turned upon him.

The judge rapped for order and the bailiff mentioned for silence.

"I stand before you to-day perfectly innocent of the crime with which I am charged," said Colonel Mashburn in a voice trembling with emotion. "I am as innocent as a new born babe or the purest angel in heaven. I spent two hours in the library with Major McLain, during which time we quarreled over the land lot line. Several blows were exchanged, and I left the house at a quarter to 12 o'clock and strolled about the fields. At about 12 o'clock I heard the report of a gun, and I believe the report I heard was the discharge of the gun that killed him. I know my case is desperate. Circumstantial evidence has already convicted me, and I have given up all hope. I am prepared for anything that may come."

"Is that all you have to say?" asked Judge Lewis.

"That is all."

The jury was out just five minutes and returned with a verdict of guilty.

A deathlike stillness pervaded the audience. The spectators craned their necks to hear the sentence of death.

The solemn words fell from the lips of the judge, and with downcast head and trembling form the doomed man received the sentence that meant to him more than tongue can tell or words express.

The execution was to be private, and the time for the expiation of the crime was set for June 5, just thirty days from the date of trial.

More like a shadow than a man Col. Mashburn was led from the court room and carried to the murderer's cell of the jail. As he leaned heavily upon the arm of the sheriff the sympathy of the entire crowd was with him. Though the evidence against him was too strong to admit of doubt, there were a great many who wished he had been acquitted. His very look appealed to them, and many eyes were wet with tears of sympathy and genuine sorrow.

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Late in the afternoon of June 4 a stranger called at the jail and asked to be allowed to see Colonel Mashburn. He was refused admittance, as the Colonel told the jailer to let no one in to see him. The stranger was persistent, and said that his mission was one of great importance to the Colonel.

The turnkey closely inspected the stranger. He was dressed in a checked business suit, and had the appearance of being a commercial man. There was a peculiar meaning in his eyes and an air of dignified command. The jailer hesitated, but the little man in the checked suit placed his hand upon the officer's shoulder, and, looking him squarely in the face, said:

"My business with Colonel Mashburn is most urgent. As surely as you live, he is an innocent man."

The jailer became interested.

"Colonel Mashburn did not kill Major McLain," continued the stranger. "Of this I am assured, and if there is a possibility of saving his life I am going to make every effort. I am convinced he is an innocent man."

Without any further persuasion the little man was admitted to the corridor and directed to the cell of the condemned man.

Colonel Mashburn was staring out of the window. Through the heavy barred opening the ruddy glow of the sunset was streaming in.

The din of the village street had subsided, and on the still evening air the deep mellow tones of the bell were calling the worshipers to vesper service. When Colonel Mashburn heard the rapping upon his grated door he started, then slowly looked around. The stranger beckoned him to the door.

For several minutes the two were engaged in earnest conversation. Then the stranger turned on his heel and walked rapidly from the prison.

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That evening just at dusk the old coachman timidly stared from the door of the servants' house in the rear of Major McLain's home. The faithful dogs were barking lustily. Some one called at the gate and the superstitious darkey closed the door.

"'Pears things air pow'ful curious. They sho is. Dis here'er a hollerin' at night am a bad sign. I's b'en a feelin' mighty queer and pow'ful skittish since marster done dead," said the coachman to the cook.

The stranger at the gate passed through the arches and walked briskly through the front inclosure. Going up to the steps he rapped loudly. The echoes rumbled through the deserted hall and came back increased a thousand fold.

No one responded and he pushed the door open and went in. The halls were deserted and the place was forlorn. Weeks had passed since the footsteps of a human being had trodden the threshold, and now in the fast gathering twilight the old home was gloomy and forbidding. The newcomer passed through the halls and entered the library, where Major McLain had been found in the cold embrace of death. In the doorway was the chair in which he was sitting when found. A gentle breeze that came through the open window played with the lace curtains and fanned the tall grasses that stood in the vases on the old-fashioned mantel. The room was strangely weird, and the feelings of the uninvited guest were difficult to be described.

The newcomer rummaged through the papers and desk of Major McLain. Everything that might throw some light on the mysterious crime was examined, but nothing was found that would give the slightest clew to the identity of the murderer. For hours the man continued the search, but his mission appeared to be fruitless. Under the dim rays of the new moon he made a careful search of the premises and surveyed the surroundings, hoping that his quick eye would fall upon something that would bring the truth.

Weary from his continued search, the detective fell asleep on the lounge in the library.

The next morning he awoke at 9 o'clock. The morning sun was streaming through the open windows and the room was flooded with light. The detective turned over and gazed at the furniture and other objects in the room. His thoughts were busy, and he was thinking of the scene that would transpire in Abondale in just three hours. The scaffold, grim and stern, and the trembling body of the Colonel flashed through his mind. It was the day of the execution and only a few hours off.

While the detective thought, his eyes followed a small ball of fire that danced and darted back and forth on the wall. It was a tiny red ball, but its brilliancy and heat were intense. He watched it as it played seemingly for his amusement. Just under the spot covered by the little fiery ball he noticed a charred place on the wall. What caused that? He revolved the question over and over again in his mind.

Springing from his bed he rushed to the wall and held a match under the quivering piece of living fire that played about like a serpent's tongue. Quickly the match flared. The detective was nervous and his brain was on fire.

On the wall were two stag's horns at equal distance. Evidently they had served as support for a gun. Going to the door, he called the old coachman.

The negro went into the room with his teeth chattering, and his eyes were dilated with superstitious fear.

"Where is the gun that hung on these horns?" asked the detective.

The coachman was gone for a moment, and returned with an old army rifle. The coachman said that he had taken it down from the rack on the morning that his master was killed, as the gun was very highly prized, and placed it in his room for safe keeping.

The gun was reloaded and placed on the horns. The little ball of fire, which was but the concentrated rays of the sun thrown through a blister in a glass of the window, danced about the powder pan of the old flint lock.

The detective placed a pillow in the chair in which Major McLain had been found murdered. Then he waited.

With a flash of fire that half way reached to the pillow and a report that awakened the echoes of the old mansion, the gun was discharged. Through the center of the pillow a bullet was buried.

The detective looked at his watch. It was 12 o'clock.

The drop fell in Abondale, ten miles away, at high noon, and Colonel Mashburn was pronounced dead in twelve minutes.

The funeral procession was interrupted by a stranger dashing madly on a foaming horse. The sheriff looked in astonishment at the reckless rider. The old turnkey at the jail wiped a tear from his eye and went back to feed the prisoners.

—Atlanta Constitution

HUMOR OF THE DAY.

Opposition.

Detroit Tribune.

"Why didn't you marry her?"
"Opposition in her family."
"Her father?"
"Herself."

An Explanation.

Washington Star.

Gabler—I want to ask you a question. What is a missing word contest?

Babler—A missing word contest? Oh, yes, it's one of the troubles a man has with his stenographer, you know.

A Freak.

Puck.

Sally Gay—Fred Broadback is the most remarkable man of my acquaintance.

Doly Swift—How so?

Sally Gay—Why, it is actually possible for him to look dignified while wearing earmuffs.

Sweet Girls.

Boston Traveler.

Mabel—How lovely of you to recognize me at once, when you haven't seen me for over three years.

Maud (with charming amiability)—Oh, I knew you the moment I set eyes on your dress.

Business Instinct.

Sketch.

"How many do two and two make?"
"Six."
"You ignorant little beggar! Don't you know that two and two make four?"
"Oh, yes! I know that, but I thought you'd beat me down a bit."

Sunday Morning.

Truth.

Aunt Dorothy—How many commandments are there, Johnnie?

Johnnie (glibly)—Ten.

Aunt Dorothy—And now, suppose you were to break one of them?

Johnnie (tentatively)—Then there'd be nine.

Something Like Heart Failure.

Chicago Tribune.

"Isn't that Miss Smedley? I thought she was sick. Somebody told me Dr. Pankey had given her up."

"Well, he did sort o' give her up, but not till after he had tried five or six years to get her."

In the Absence of Specific Knowledge

Puck.

First Citizen—I don't think it is our business, but I feel sure that England isn't entitled to the territory she claims from Venezuela.

Second Citizen—Why do you think so?

First Citizen—If she was, she'd claim more.

The New Goddess.

Detroit Tribune.

"Yes," answered the Olympian Jove, "it has struck us. Hear that dull, sickening thud. Yes? Well, that's Juno practicing with thunderbolts."

And the king of gods and men continued to partake bitterly of cold ambrosia off the window sill.

Cautions.

Puck.

Mrs. Roorback (at the church festival)—I reckon I'll have to ask you to take the widow Huggins, Ike.

Alkali Ike (cautiously)—Take her whur?

"Out to supper, of course."

"Oh, all right. I'll take her anywhur whur thar is a crowd to protect me; thought you meant take her home."

In Pretty Good Standing.

Chicago Post.

"I wish you wouldn't invite that man here, Edward," said Mrs. Blublood. "I am sure he don't move in the best circles."

"Well," replied Mr. Blublood, thoughtfully, "I don't know much about social circles, but I have reason to know that he moves in the very best banking circles, and that is good enough for me."

Then Seek It Elsewhere.

Pittsburg Chronicle Telegraph.

"I tell you," said an ardent Prohibitionist to a friend, "ex-Governor St. John is the right sort of a man. He sticks up to his principles. He says he will never leave Kansas as long as a drop of whisky is left in the State."

"Gracious!" was the reply; "is he as fond of liquor as that?"

Art Education.

Boston Transcript.

Mr. Louis J. Rhead's letter in Modern Art on Paris art education has made a great deal of talk among artists and students, and naturally those who haven't been or won't be able to get there are much pleased with Mr. Rhead's judgment as to the uselessness and mischief of student life in Paris. There is no doubt a vast deal of truth in what he says. A successful artist of the Listener's acquaintance, of foreign birth and education, has followed this course in the art education of his own son. He has given him the most thorough possible training in the two best art schools of New York and Boston, declaring that the "grammar of the art" may be obtained as well here as anywhere in the world. This accomplished, he has sent him to travel for a while modestly in Europe, where he will work practically without a teacher, visiting the galleries of Paris, Madrid and Rome. How long he will remain at any one place will depend on the amount of real inspiration and benefit that he gets from it; for the school which kindles the artistic spirit in one man may not kindle it in another. This programme will hardly involve the young artist in the trap of the absinthe-drinking Bohemians of Paris, for he will probably not remain there long enough for that.

After Hoop-'oles.

Young Weatherbee's colt and open buggy whirled round from the road into the yard with such speed that the two off wheels lifted clear from the ground and had the appearance of spinning in the air before they touched earth again.

"Oh, my goodness, mar!" cried a girl who entered the kitchen with her arms full of stove wood. "Jest you look out 'n' see Tom Weatherbee kitin' up to the door. I s'pose he'll break his neck some time or other with that colt, but I hope 'twon't be in our yard."

The middle-aged woman who was paring apples at the table let fall an apple on the floor as she craned about to gaze from the window.

"I guess he's come to see yer father, ain't he? Yes, I guess he has," she responded as she continued to stare into the yard. "There he is a-talkin' with him now. But who's he got with him? You didn't say he wa'n't alone, Emmerline. Why didn't you say he wa'n't alone, Emmerline?"

"I s'pose I didn't notice," was the response from the girl, who now dropped her wood pell-mell into the box behind the stove and then hurried forward to the window, but keeping carefully out of sight of any one near the house.

"Didn't notice!" repeated the mother in great scorn. "You must be gittin's blind's your father then. But you can't see nothin' but Tom Weatherbee if he's anywheres within gunshot. I never did see such a girl. Stan' outer the way, can't ye? Don't ye think I wanter git er glimpse of something myself?"

The girl moved a little to one side. As the woman reached still further forward another apple rolled from her lap and went to the most distant corner of the room.

Emmerline blushed a deep red; she cast a look of anger at her mother, but she did not speak.

Outside the steaming colt had been pulled up by an immense pile of hoop-poles that covered the whole of the east part of the yard. Near this pile a man was at work with his ax splitting the poles and carefully placing those he had prepared on a heap close by him.

A drooping sorrel horse stood a few yards away attached to a long farm cart. The man worked slowly, and he peered at his poles and his ax as one who cannot see clearly. As the young horse stopped the man leaned on a pole and looked up, the bright winter sun shining full on his old face and making it look still older.

Tom Weatherbee's companion, a heavily bearded young fellow in an ulster that came up above his ears, here made a quick movement as if he would leave his seat in the buggy, but he changed his mind and drew the bearskin yet more closely over his knees, shivering as he did so, and still gazing at the old man.

"That you, Tom Weatherbee?" now asked the man.

"Hullo, Uncle Ben, course it's me," was the answer.

"I thought 'twas your colt by the way he came into the yard. Got him 'bout broke?"

"Pretty nigh," replied Weatherbee. "Are you goin' after hoop-'oles this mornin'?"

"I was thinkin' I'd go. I ain't good for much these days, but I can make out to cut hoop-'oles 'bout the same's ever. I ain't quite outlived my usefulness yet. I tell my wife I hope the Lord'll call me 'fore I outlive my usefulness."

Here the young man in the ulster began to cough. He drew out his handkerchief and coughed still more.

"Got a stranger with you, ain't ye?" inquired the old man. "Won't you both git out 'n' come in 'n' warm? Thermometer only two above this mornin'. I tell 'em we oughter have snow. 'Taint seasonable to have winter come in 'thout snow. 'N' it's a lot easier to sled the hoop-'oles than 'tis to wheel 'em. Better come in, hadn't ye? Emmerline ain't seen you, Tom, since you 'n' she went to that concert."

Here the speaker laughed a little far down in his throat.

"She knows I've been away—been to Boston," said Tom. "I'm comin' over this evenin'. Can't stop now. This young feller come out from Boston with me; he's got a great notion he wants to go into the woods 'n' see hoop-'oles cut. I told him 'twan't much of a sight, but he could go with you, Uncle Ben."

"Certain, certain," briskly. "I'm goin' to start right off. If you be'n five minutes later I sh'd have be'n gone. I hope you're wrapped up well, young man; it'll be real chilly goin' over, but when we git into the woods 'tain't nigh so cold; 'n' it's jest as pleasant as it can be. I tell um the woods are jest about as pleasant in the winter 's they be in the summer, only folks don't know s' much how they be then. But mebby you won't like it over there. Be you from Boston, young man?"

—The speaker's blurred eyes were fixed on the stranger like one who tries to see clearly and cannot.

"Yes," said the young man, "just now I'm from Boston, but I'm only three weeks up from South America."

"South America?" repeated the old man in a low, introspective voice. He was silent a moment before he said:

"I gen'ly stay in the woods all day. Do you think you c'n stan' it?"

"I'll try. Put in an ax for me and I'll see if I can keep warm."

Uncle Ben laughed down in his throat again; his face lighted up wonderfully.

"Mighty glad to have company," he said. "I'll go in 'n' have wife put a few more doughnuts into my tin pail, 'n' mince pie—mince pie's real stayin' food—you c'n cut a lot of hoop-'oles ag'int half er one er my wife's mince pies. Hadn't ye better come in?"

"No; I'll stroll about till you're ready."

The young man now threw back the robe with a decisive movement and swung himself from the buggy to the ground.

"Much obliged to you, Weatherbee," he said, to which that young man responded:

"Oh, that's all right."

Then the colt, which had been industriously pawing among the hoop-pole chips, made a very short turn out of the yard and the two near wheels spun abount in the air before the animal struck into his long, fast trot down the road.

The stranger left in the yard stood a moment; then he walked to the barn, paused there and sniffed the odors of hay and cattle before going to the east door, which opened into the cowyard, which opened into the lane. He went down the lane, his feet resounding on the hard frozen earth. At the foot of the slope ran a brook. There was a narrow stream of sparkling water now going swiftly between its edges of ice.

The young man gazed down into this stream as if he could see something besides icy water shining beneath a wintry sky. After a moment he drew out his handkerchief again, and this time he pressed it for an instant to his eyes. Having done this he exclaimed aloud:

"Odd how this cold does make a fellow's eyes sting."

He turned to retrace his steps, but he paused yet one more minute to send his gaze comprehensively over the brown stretches of pasture with their rocks and their black looking savin trees and clumps of dark juniper bushes. A large black speck, and then another, came sailing along in the air and alighted in the meadow.

"There are the crows," said the young man.

He turned now and ran up toward the barn, his long ulster flapping against his ankles.

There was Uncle Ben just putting a buffalo skin with very little hair on it into the farm cart. The three-quart tin pail was already there. Emmerline came hurrying out with a paper bag in her hand."

"Some of them French pearmains, par," she said. "They're jest right to eat now. Don't you let um freeze."

She had a red shawl held loosely over her head and shoulders. Perhaps she knew that the color and the folds made her dark face and black eyes "show off" well. She glanced coquettishly at the stranger, who gravely raised his hat, looking intently at her as he did so. She blushed beneath the gaze, turned and ran back to the house.

"You jest did that to git a good look at that young feller, Emmerline, you know you did," was the remark that greeted her entrance into the kitchen.

Her mother was standing at the window gazing out.

"'N' what if I did?" was the retort; "ain't you starin' at him yourself? He don't look like the fellers round here," the girl went on in a softer voice. "He's got kind of a style, of something that makes him diff'rent."

"So he has," said Mrs. Leeds, "'n' I'm sure I don't see why he wants to go into the woods with your father. It must be jest as stoopid 's it can be over to the wood lot cuttin' hoop-'oles. I wish you'd pick up that apple there under the stand."

The girl stooped and secured the apple, which she brought to her mother. She stood looking down at the elder woman as she industriously passed the short "shoe knife" round and round the fruit, from which the red skin dropped in the pan in big curls.

Emmerline was gazing at her mother in a rather critical way; it seemed to her that this woman must always have had that same gray, sandy hair drawn back in a hard, small knot; always the same thin lips with the white mark of the scar where a dog had bitten her when she was a child, and the knifelike nose, with its nostrils pinched in so that one wondered if the owner could breathe through them. There was a sour expression over the whole face.

Involuntarily Emmerline was asking herself if by any possibility she should ever look like that. And she recalled what her father had told her once.

"You'll never be so han'some 's your mar was, Emmerline. There ain't no girls round so han'some as she was."

Then he had glanced at his wife, who had flushed faintly, and who said nothing. But she hadn't scolded for an hour or two after.

"I don't believe she was han'some one grain," was Emmerline's verdict now as she stood there.

"Ain't you got nothin' to do, I sh'd like to know," exclaimed her mother, now glancing with a frown up at the tall girl.

But Emmerline wasn't afraid of her mother. She answered easily that she "s'posed she could go 'n' wash the cabbage 'n' p'taters, 'n' have um ready for dinner, but there wa'n't no hurry."

She moved toward the kitchen door. With her hand on the latch she asked with animation:

"Who do you s'pose he can be, mar? Jew see how he lifted his hat to me?"

"Yes, I seen him."

"There don't nobody lift their hat like that round here. 'N' that lock of hair so kind of smooth on his forehead. I saw it; 'twas smooth, but 'twas kind of ca'less like, too. He's got what I call style. If Tom Weatherbee comes over to-night I'll find out all about him."

"If Tom 'd be'n bright he wouldn't have brought that feller anywhere round where you was," said Mrs. Leeds with a sneer in her voice.

The girl didn't care for the sneer. She stood leaning against the wall near the door.

"I wonder if par'll bring him home to supper," she remarked, not as if expecting any answer. "Le's have a first-rate supper, mar. Hot doughnuts 'n' cream biscuit. I'll make um. Mar—"

Emmerline now looked directly at her mother, who, as if impelled by the gaze, raised her own eyes expectantly.

"I've be'n trying to think what that feller made me think of," she said, "'n' now I've jest thought—you can't guess."

"No, I can't."

There was a subtle excitement coming in the girl's manner, and her mother felt it, though she distinctly resented the fact.

Emmerline left the door and advanced into the middle of the room.

"Wa'n't it funny," she said hastily, "but when he took off his hat 'n' I saw his forehead 'n' hair I thought of that picture of Ed. Where is that picture, mar?"

"In the top, right-hand little drawer in the desk," was the immediate answer.

Emmerline went to the old desk in the corner of the room. She took out an ambrotype case and opened it. There looked at her a very animated lifelike face of a boy of ten or eleven. He had a peculiarly bright, fearless expression and proud pose of the head.

"Mar," said the girl in a low voice, "how long is it now since Ed run away?"

"Fifteen years 'n' ten weeks," replied Mrs. Leeds.

She took up another apple, and instead of cutting into it she cut her finger.

"I wish you'd bring me a rag from the rag bag," she said harshly.

Emmerline brought the rag and bound up the finger.

"I'll cut the rest of the apples," she said.

"No, you needn't either," quickly. "I'll do um myself."

Emmerline took the ambrotype again in her hand and walked to the window with it.

"His forehead did look jest like this," she repeated.

"Emmerline," exclaimed her mother, "how silly you be. Put the picture up 'n' go 'n' tend to them vegetables."

This time the girl obeyed without speaking. But when she was back again in the kitchen and washing potatoes at the sink she asked:

"What made Ed run away, mar?"

She had always intended to ask this question, but even she had hitherto been afraid to do so.

Mrs. Leeds laid down her knife and looked up at her daughter. A dull red mounted to her forehead and made her usually pallid face have a strange appearance.

"'Cause," she said, "I told him he shouldn't go skatin' that evenin' with the other boys; 'n' I told him if he did he needn't come back again. 'N' he went, 'n' he didn't come back. 'N' your father tried so hard to find him he got 'bout crazy, 'n' finally he heard a boy like Ed had gone in a ship to South America. That was the last we ever knew of him. I make no doubt he's dead. Yes, I'm sure he's dead."

The woman said the word "dead" each time in a loud, hard voice that resounded in the room. Emmerline could not help shrinking as she heard it. She could not see that her mother was suffering; she could only feel that she was hard and cruel.

"Edward was a spirited boy," said Mrs. Leeds, not as if she was speaking to her companion, but to something in herself. "He was real spirited; he wouldn't always mind. His father wanted to be easy with him, so I had to pull the reins up tight. It's a boy's place to mind. His father said I was too strict with him; but you can't have a child overrunnin' ye; you can't do it."

The woman rose and placed her pan of apples on the table and walked quickly out of the room.

Emmerline stood a moment gazing at the closed door; then she sat down with the apples in her lap and finished paring and slicing them.

"I remember Ed," she was thinking. "I remember he was always giving me his share of candy and things, and dragging me on his sled; but I don't remember how he looked. I must have been almost four when he ran away."

After a pause she said in a whisper, "I guess mother aggravated him awful."

And then Emmerline stopped thinking of her brother and began to think of Tom Weatherbee.

Out on the solitary road the old sorrel horse was going at a slow trot-trot, and the cart was bumping in and out of the frozen ruts.

Mr. Leeds was standing in front, one hand holding fast to a cart stake, the other grasping the lines. His hands were covered with large leather mittens much spotted with turpentine from pine logs and handling of wood for two winters. He wore a long, dark blue frock cut in a general way like a shirt, and his calfskin boots came nearly to his knees, where his trousers were tucked into them. These boots had been greased to that degree by the owner of them that the tallow showed in white patches on the leather; and the soles, as the young man looked at them, seemed two inches thick to him. This latter person stood close behind his companion, and he was holding to a stake on each side of him, but even thus he lurched much as the cart rattled about on the road.

Nothing was said for some time; it was not a good opportunity for conversation. But when the horse was turned into a cart path that led through a pasture, where the ruts were less deep and rough, the old man turned to his companion.

"You see, we're gittin' under the lee of this hill, 'n' the wind don't strike us much; when we git into the wood lot you wouldn't know the wind blew at all. It's jest as cozy there, 'n' the chickadees sing close by, 'n' you c'n see um on the trees. 'N' you'd laugh to see how bold the squirrels be there. They jest ain't much 'fraid with me. They know me firstrate."

Here the speaker gave his peculiar laugh.

His mild face and filmy eyes were turned toward the young man, who did not reply immediately; who, indeed, seemed to have a slight difficulty in enunciating when he did speak.

"You own a good deal of woodland Mr. Weatherbee told me."

"Wall, yes, considerable; but now I'm gittin' so I can't work it 's I could, 'tain't very profitable. 'N' I have to work alone, 'n' since my eyesight failed me I don't have such confidence in myself. I have to trust to the old horse, 'n' kinder instinct I guess 'tis. I c'n pick out the hoop-'oles, 'n' cut um, 'n' trim um, 'n' split um, 'n' I c'n take um into Providence 'n' sell um. I expect to cart off several thousand 'fore spring. But if I lose my eyesight much more I sh'll have to stop it. I tell you, I do hate to outlive my usefulness. But how I be talkin'—a reg'lar string. I d'know how 'tis, but it's real easy to talk to you, though you be a young man 'n' a stranger. Gen'ly I don't mean to git to talkin' to young folks. It's natchral they should git impatient to hear me goin' on so."

The other occupant of the cart made no distinct reply, though he said something inarticulate.

Presently the sorrel stopped of his own accord in a small clearing on the warm side of a wooded hill.

"Here we be," said the old man briskly as he clambered out of the cart. He gazed about, his eyes blinking in the sunlight.

"Now, ain't this pleasant?" he exclaimed. "You wouldn't think, would ye, that the mercury was most down to zero this morning?"

"No, I should not think so," answered the young man. "Let me take the horse out for you. I suppose you hitch him somewhere and put on this blanket."

He spoke quickly and began to unbuckle the lines. Mr. Leeds took hold of the tug and gave a jerk to it to loosen it so that he might pull it from the whiffletree. Having done this he held the clumsy leather strap in his hand as if he had forgotten that he held it.

"Odd, ain't it," he exclaimed in a moment, still grasping the tug. "Odd how voices will make you think of things. Jew ever notice that voices'll bring back times past?"

He waited as if for an answer, and the young man said "Yes."

Mr. Leeds went on with an old man's garrulousness.

"Now, when you spoke I thought of my son Ed jest as plain. Ed was a splendid boy. He had consid'able of a will of his own, but if you took him right he was splendid, if I do say it. He 'n' I always got along firstrate, but he 'n' his mother didn't jibe the best kind. I s'pose they both meant well."

A pause. The horse was taken from the shafts and blanketed, then led to the warmest place and hitched to a tree.

"Sometimes," began Mr. Leeds, "I feel 's if I couldn't die 'thout seein' Ed. But I s'pose he's dead. He must be dead or he'd have come back to his old father. But how I be talkin'. We must begin on the hoop-'oles. Do you think you can tell a good one when you see it? Wall, you want to thin out the trees so't they'll grow better, you know. Le's begin on them young ches'nuts over yonder."

The old man put his ax on his shoulder, but he did not go forward. He turned and gazed silently at his companion, and then asked just above a whisper:

"Jew say you'd jest come from South America?"

"Yes."

The young man's face seemed to break away from a too difficult control. He dropped his ax and stepped closer to the man near him. His voice quivered as if he himself were suddenly old.

"I used to go into the woods with you," he began, then stopped before the dim gaze upon him. He began again: "Father, father, don't you remember how I liked to go after hoop-'oles with you? Par, par, I say."

The old man had tottered toward the young man and fallen into his arms.

In a few moments Mr. Leeds raised himself. He put up one huge mitten and brushed it across his face.

"You needn't think I'm goin' to have a fit, nor nothin'," he said. "I'm only jest happy, 'n' when a man ain't uset to bein' happy it's apt to go hard."

—Maria Louise Poole, in New York Tribune.

OUT OF THE ORDINARY.

About 1 per cent. of all musical instruments manufactured are made for left-handed people.

According to modern measurement, the Ark was 525 feet long, eighty-seven feet wide and fifty-two feet deep.

A German has computed that from 1802 until 1813 Napoleon I "consumed" 5,800,000 men, or at the rate of half a million a year.

The first tea ever raised for the market in Arkansas was offered for sale in Memphis recently. The consignment consisted of three hundred pounds, and was of fine quality.

The meaning of the three letters, I. H. S., carved upon pulpits, or embroidered on church hangings, is Jesus Hominum Salvator, in Latin; Anglicised, Jesus, the Saviour of men.

The first known coin is Chinese. It is copper, and specimens weighing from one to five pounds, and supposed to date from a period at least two thousand years before Christ, are still in existence.

Charlemagne possessed a tablecloth woven from asbestos. He used to astonish his guests after dinner by gathering it up and throwing it into the fire, from whence he drew it cleansed from gravy and other grease.

Germany's new census returns twenty-eight cities with a population of over 100,000. The city of Hamburg has 622,745 inhabitants. Munich and Leipsic are running a close race, the former having reached 400,002, and leading Leipsic by 1,554.

The city of Bordeaux was deprived of its bells for rebellion; and, when it was offered to have them restored, the people refused it, after having tasted the ease and convenience of "being freed from the constant din and jangling of bells."

Possibly the most expensive cigars ever made were the 20,000 Havanas made for Spanish Marshal Prim as a present for Napoleon III, each cigar being stamped with the imperial N. in gold. They are said to have cost £3,000.

Arrangements have been made by the German military authorities on the first intimation of war to convey by rail all the women and children in such large towns as Metz and Strasburg, as well as smaller places, into Germany.

Putting the feet in hot water will invariably cure a headache, from whatever cause it arises. The head aches when, from any cause, the blood vessels in the brain are too full. Putting the feet in hot water draws the blood from the head.

The oldest building in the world that has been uninterruptedly used for church purposes is St. Martin's Cathedral, at Canterbury, England. The building was originally erected for a church, and has been regularly used as a place for religious gatherings for more than 1,500 years.

In Saxony no one is permitted to shoe horses unless he has passed a public examination and is properly qualified. A great school at Dresden has students from all parts of the world studying "farriery." This includes not only shoeing horses, but their care and treatment—a provision that saves a great deal of money for farmers and others owning horses.

Liberia was founded in 1821, as a republic for emancipated negroes; yet after seventy-four years of existence the colony has less than 20,000 inhabitants.

There are upwards of eighty thousand inhabitants on the slopes and skirts of Vesuvius. If it were not for the fertilizing effect of the volcanic products, not more than one-tenth of that number would be able to find means of subsistence there.

Light blue eyes are generally the most powerful, and next to these are gray. The lighter the pupil the greater and longer continued is the degree of tension the eyes can sustain. The majority of first-class shots are men whose eyes are either blue or gray in color.

The first public representation of a play in England of which we have any record took place, we learn, in the reign of Richard II, 1378, and was called a miracle. The subject was the history of St. Catherine, and the characters were performed by the priests of Dunstable.

The Dutch have a delightfully original way of collecting their taxes. If, after due notice has been given, the money is not sent, the authorities place one or two hungry militiamen in the house, to be lodged and maintained at the expense of the defaulter until the amount of the tax is paid.

Epernay, France, is a vast subterranean "city of champagne." For miles and miles there are streets hewn out of solid chalk, flanked with piles of champagne of all brands and qualities. There is no light in this labyrinth of streets, crossings and turnings except what the sputtering candles afford.

At Borodino there were 250,000 men drawn up in hostile array. Before night 78,000, or 31 per cent., had been killed and wounded. Borodino was the only battle at which Napoleon exhibited signs of uneasiness. He had reason in this case, for he was in the heart of the enemy's country, and if defeated could not expect help from any quarter.

Among the ancients mourning was expressed by various signs—tearing their clothes, wearing sackcloth, laying aside ensigns of honor; thus Plutarch, from the time of his leaving the city with Pompey, neither shaved his head, nor, as usual, wore the crown or garland. Among the Romans a year of mourning was ordained by law for women who had lost their husbands.

Scales are now made with such extreme delicacy that they will correctly weigh the smallest hair from an eyebrow. Two pieces of paper of equal weight can be placed in the scales and an autograph written in pencil on one piece will cause the other to ascend. A signature containing nine letters has been thus weighed and proved to be the 15,500th part of an ounce, troy.